

OfficialPATENT
Application Serial No. 09/734,882
Docket No. 0026-0010REMARKS

In the non-final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Aalbersberg (U.S. Patent No. 5,946,678) in view of Stern et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,397,218).

By this Amendment, Applicants cancel claim 5 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claims 1-4, 8, and 9 to improve form. In particular, claims 1, 8, and 9 have been amended to include features similar to the features of canceled claim 5. Claims 1-4 and 6-12 are pending. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to the pending claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected pending claims 1-4 and 6-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Aalbersberg in view of Stern et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Aalbersberg discloses a user interface for a relevance-ranking, full-text document retrieval system that indicates to the user information about the documents found in the search (col. 1, lines 62-65). In a results window, a document header or title is accompanied by an indicator which employs a distinctive representation to directly indicate to the user the relative contributions of the individual words from the query to each listed document (col. 2, lines 4-8).

Stern et al. discloses a web browser that establishes hypertext links to a server, enabling a user to view graphical and textual representations of information provided by the server (col. 1, lines 40-42).

By contrast, the present invention recited in amended claim 1, for example, includes a combination of features of a method performed by a client device for highlighting search terms in

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web documents distributed over a network. The method includes generating a search query including a search term; receiving a list of one or more links to web documents distributed over the network in response to the search query; receiving selection of one of the links; retrieving a web document corresponding to the selected link from the network; intercepting the web document; and highlighting one or more occurrences of the search term in the intercepted web document.

Neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests these features. For example, neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests intercepting a web document.

When rejecting a similar feature in canceled claim 5, the Examiner alleged that Aalbersberg discloses intercepting documents (Office Action, page 5). The Examiner relied upon Fig. 5 of Aalbersberg for support and alleged that "the documents are displayed with the highlighted search term implies the documents are intercepted before being displayed" (Office Action, page 5). Applicants disagree.

With regard to Fig. 5, Aalbersberg discloses:

As in the published system, the user can then obtain a full view of any of the listed documents by simply clicking on the adjacent view button, and a viewer window 52 (FIG. 5) pops up which displays the full text. In the prior art systems, it was known to highlight the query words in the full text document. In accordance with a further feature of the present invention, the query words are highlighted using the same distinctive representation associated with each query word. Thus, in the viewer window 52, in the second text line, the word "car" is presented on a lightly shaded background, the word "sales" on a moderately shaded background, and two lines further down the word "Europe" on a darkly shaded background, and so on throughout the text displayed.

This section of Aalbersberg simply discloses that it is known to highlight query words in the full text of a document. Nowhere in this section, or elsewhere, does Aalbersberg disclose

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intercepting a web document, as recited in amended claim 1. Instead, Aalbersberg discloses that a full-text retrieval engine (FTR) performs the highlighting of query words (col. 8, lines 21-25). Aalbersberg defines FTR as an abbreviation for any known "full-text retrieval engine" which can be stored as software in memory 13 or accessed via a network (col. 6, lines 48-51). In other words, FTR is a search engine that calculates similarity between a query and documents in a document base (col. 7, lines 52-54). FTR does not "intercept" a web document, as recited in amended claim 1, but instead retrieves documents as part of the normal document retrieval process (col. 7, lines 52-64; col. 8, lines 17-25).

At column 8, lines 21-25, Aalbersberg discloses:

In the viewer window 52, the system using viewer data 78 colors each document word associated with a query term with the color uniquely associated with the query term using any known process represented by block FTR process 3 67.

Nowhere in this section, or elsewhere, does Aalbersberg disclose intercepting a web document, as recited in amended claim 1. The disclosure of Stern et al. provides nothing to cure these deficiencies in the disclosure of Aalbersberg.

Neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests highlighting one or more occurrences of a search term in the intercepted web document, as also recited in amended claim 1. Because neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests intercepting a web document, neither reference can be relied upon for disclosing highlighting one or more occurrences of a search term in the intercepted web document.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claims 2-4 and 6 depend from claim 1 and are, therefore, patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al. for at

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least the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

Independent claims 8-10 recite features similar to the features described above with regard to claim 1. Claims 8-10 are, therefore, patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, for reasons similar to those given with regard to claim 1. Claims 8-10 are also patentable for reasons of their own.

For example, claim 10 recites a combination of features of a computer-readable medium that stores instructions executable by at least one processor. The computer-readable medium includes a browser configured to generate a search query that includes a search term, receive a list of one or more references to documents distributed over a network in response to the search query, receive selection of one or more of the references, and retrieve one or more documents corresponding to the selected one or more references; and a browser assistant configured to intercept the one or more documents, highlight the search term in the one or more documents, and present the one or more documents, with the highlighted search term, to a user.

Neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests these features. For example, neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests a browser assistant that intercepts one or more documents, highlights the search term in the one or more documents, and presents the one or more documents, with the highlighted search term, to a user. The Examiner alleged that Aalbersberg discloses a browser assistant and cited FTR process 3 of Figs. 6 and 7 for support (Office Action, page 9). The Examiner also cited column 8, lines 21-25, as disclosing the claimed browser assistant (Office Action, page 9). Applicants respectfully disagree.

As described previously, Aalbersberg defines FTR as an abbreviation for any known

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"full-text retrieval engine" which can be stored as software in memory 13 or accessed via a network (col. 6, lines 48-51). In other words, FTR is a search engine that calculates similarity between a query and documents in a document base (col. 7, lines 52-54). FTR is not a browser assistant, as recited in claim 10.

Column 8, lines 21-25, of Aalbersberg is reproduced above. Nowhere in this section, or elsewhere, does Aalbersberg disclose a browser assistant that intercepts one or more documents retrieved by a browser to highlight a search term in the one or more documents, as recited in claim 10. The disclosure of Stern et al. provides nothing to cure these deficiencies in the disclosure of Aalbersberg.

Applicants presented these arguments in the last response, but the Examiner did not address them. If the Examiner persists with this rejection of claim 10, Applicants request that the Examiner explain how the full-text retrieval engine of Aalbersberg is the equivalent of the claimed browser assistant. Applicants submit that they are not equivalent.

For at least these additional reasons, Applicants submit that claim 10 is patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claim 11 depends from claim 10 and is, therefore, patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al. for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 10.

Independent claim 7 recites a combination of features of a system for highlighting search terms in documents remotely distributed over a network to aid in the determination of relevance of the documents. The system includes means for generating a search query including one or more search terms; means for receiving a list of one or more references to documents in the network in response to the search query; means for highlighting one or more occurrences of the

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one or more search terms in the list of one or more references; means for receiving selection of one of the one or more references; means for retrieving a document corresponding to the selected reference; and means for highlighting the one or more search terms in the retrieved document.

Neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests these features. For example, neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests means for highlighting one or more occurrences of the one or more search terms in the list of one or more references.

The Examiner alleged that Aalbersberg discloses highlighting one or more occurrences of the search term in the list of one or more references and cited column 8, lines 21-25, of Aalbersberg for support (Office Action, page 2). Applicants disagree.

At column 7, line 11, through column 8, line 25, Aalbersberg discloses a list of steps that describe the manner in which a search query is performed. At step 10, Aalbersberg discloses that a list of result items are presented to a user in a results manner (col. 7, line 61 - col. 8, line 17). Aalbersberg illustrates this presentation in Fig. 4. As shown in Fig. 4, Aalbersberg does not disclose highlighting any terms in the list of titles/headers in any manner. The disclosure of Stern et al. provides nothing to cure these deficiencies in the disclosure of Aalbersberg.

At step 12, which the Examiner identified, Aalbersberg discloses coloring document words that match a query term in a full text document (col. 8, lines 21-25). This is quite different from highlighting one or more occurrences of the one or more search terms in the list of one or more references, as recited in claim 7. Therefore, this section provides nothing to cure the above-identified deficiencies in the disclosure of Aalbersberg.

Applicants presented these arguments in the last response, but the Examiner did not

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address them. If the Examiner persists with this rejection of claim 7, Applicants request that the Examiner identify where in the disclosure of Aalbersberg or Stern et al. the feature of highlighting one or more occurrences of the one or more search terms in the list of one or more references is disclosed. Applicants submit that this feature is not disclosed by either reference.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 7 is patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination.

Independent claim 12 recites a combination of features of a web browser. The web browser includes instructions for obtaining a search term; instructions for generating a search query from the search term; instructions for obtaining a list of references to documents distributed over a network using the search query, the references including links to the documents and textual descriptions of the links; instructions for highlighting occurrences of the search term in the list of references; instructions for retrieving a document corresponding to one of the references; instructions for highlighting each occurrence of the search term in the retrieved document; and instructions for displaying the highlighted document to a user.

Neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests these features. For example, neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests instructions for obtaining a list of references to documents distributed over a network using the search query, where the references include links to the documents and textual descriptions of the links. The Examiner did not address the feature that the references include links to documents and textual descriptions of the links, as recited in claim 12.

Further, neither Aalbersberg nor Stern et al. discloses or suggests highlighting occurrences of the search term in the list of references. As explained above with regard to claim

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7, Aalbersberg does not disclose highlighting any terms in the list of titles/headers in any manner.

Stern et al. does not disclose the act of highlighting.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 12 is patentable over Aalbersberg and Stern et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the application and the timely allowance of pending claims 1-4 and 6-12.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 35 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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